UNITED NATIONS

Daily Highlights

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F R I D A Y H I G H L I G H T S

* Secretary-General to leave New York this weekend for six-day visit to Haiti, Argentina and Colombia; will attend Ibero-American Summit Meeting and Non-Aligned Movement Conference.

* Bosnian cease-fire continues to hold despite firing incidents in some areas; UNPROFOR clears road from Sarajevo to Gorazde of mines.

* United Nations to pay $150 million to troop-contributing countries after receiving significant payments of peace-keeping arrears.

* Chairman of Special Commission says Iraq has not been complying with Security Council resolutions; stresses need for full disclosure in relation to biological weapons programme.

* Secretary-General expresses disappointment at lack of progress towards ban on land-mines at Conventional Weapons Review Conference.

* International Law Commission to present final draft code of crimes against peace and security to General Assembly next year.

* United Nations to observe International Day for Eradication of Poverty on 17 October.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali will depart this weekend for a six-day tour that will take him to Haiti, Argentina and Colombia, a United Nations spokesman announced today. He is expected back in New York on 20 October.

In Haiti, the Secretary-General will participate in a ceremony commemorating the first anniversary of President Aristide's return. He will also visit the headquarters of the United Nations Mission in Haiti (UNMIH) and attend briefings on the Mission's work. In Argentina, Mr. Boutros-Ghali will attend the Ibero-American Summit Meeting. In Colombia, he will participate in the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned Movement.

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The Bosnian cease-fire continued to hold today despite firing incidents around Doboj, the Ozren salient and Gradacac, according to the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). There were reports of intense military activity in north-western Bosnia but the Force was unable to confirm them. United Nations military observers last night entered Sanski Most, on the north-western confrontation line, at the invitation of the Bosnian Army. They confirmed that the town was quiet, although there was some firing to the north and east.

The Joint Commission consisting of UNPROFOR and representatives of the Bosnian parties is scheduled to meet at the chief-of-staff level in Sarajevo on Monday to discuss arrangements for implementation of the cease-fire. The Bosnian capital remained quiet today, with the Force enjoying complete freedom of movement. Meanwhile, French peace-keepers demined the road to Gorazde, opening it to all but heavy vehicles.

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The United Nations is to pay $150 million to troop-contributing States, having recently received significant payments of arrears to the peace-keeping budget, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, Joseph E. Connor, told the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) yesterday. He said the Secretary-General had decided on that action trusting that the reimbursements would help Member States that had faced the most severe problems due to the suspension of payments last May.

The United Nations had received a total of $100 million from the Russian Federation, the United States and Brazil, Mr. Connor continued. Nevertheless, it would still owe troop-contributors some $900 at the end of the month and $1.1 billion by year's end. Although around 30 States had paid various amounts to the regular budget in the last few weeks, the Organization's borrowing from peace-keeping would reach $200 million in November unless additional payments were received.

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The Executive Chairman of the United Nations Special Commission, Rolf Ekeus, today said that Iraq had not been cooperating with the Commission in line with Security Council resolution 687 (1991) and other relevant resolutions. He told correspondents at Headquarters that Iraq had kept secret a major weapons programme which had been developed and put into effect before the Gulf War.

(more)

The Iraqi programme involved the large-scale production of biological warfare agents, Mr. Ekeus continued. Those agents had been put into delivery systems -- bombs and the warheads of long-range missiles -- which had then been deployed. In addition, Iraq had indigenously developed and produced Scud-type missiles and successfully flight-tested them. That made it very difficult for the Commission to ascertain the size of Iraq's arsenal.

Iraq had claimed to have unilaterally destroyed all biological agents and other prohibited items, he went on. However, it had also stated that no documentary evidence of such destruction existed. Members of the Security Council did not trust the Iraqi statements and the matter required further investigation. All of the Council members had expressed strong support for the work of the Commission, he added.

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The Secretary-General today expressed disappointment at the lack of progress towards a ban on anti-personnel land-mines at the Review Conference of States Parties to the 1980 Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. A United Nations spokesman said it appeared that the three-week Conference would end today without substantial agreement on the issue, even though compromise proposals had been put forward.

Land-mines took an enormous human toll every year, primarily of innocent civilians, he noted. In addition, mine-clearing was a major and expensive component of many United Nations peace-keeping operations. Those who supported a ban must continue their efforts at future intergovernmental meetings.

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The International Law Commission is expected to present a final draft code of crimes against the peace and security of mankind to the General Assembly next year, Commission Chairman Pemmaraju Sreenivasa Rao told the Sixth Committee (Legal) yesterday. He did so while introducing the chapters of the Commission's report dealing with the draft code, State responsibility and international responsibility for injurious consequences arising out of acts not prohibited by international law.

In considering the draft code, the Commission decided to concentrate on four international crimes -- aggression, genocide, systematic or mass violations of human rights, and exceptionally serious war crimes. Other crimes were originally identified in the first reading of the draft --

international terrorism; illicit traffic in narcotic drugs; intervention; colonial domination and other forms of alien domination; apartheid; the recruitment, use, financing and training of mercenaries; and willful and severe damage to the environment.

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The United Nations will observe the International Day for the Eradication of Poverty next Tuesday with a ceremony honouring victims of extreme poverty and those who work alongside them. The ceremony, which will be held on the United Nations Visitors' Plaza, is being co-sponsored by the International Movement/Fourth World.

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